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Viewing cable 06RIYADH8989, MOI UNDERSCORES NEED FOR BROAD AND FLEXIBLE ENERGY

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Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06RIYADH8989**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06RIYADH8989	2006-12-04 13:38	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Embassy Riyadh

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/06/13/115715/wikileaks-cables-show-worry-about.html>

VZCZCXRO5403
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHRH #8989/01 3381338
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 041338Z DEC 06
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RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
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RHRMAKS/COMUSNAVCENT IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 RIYADH 008989

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DOE PASS TO GPERSON AND AALVAREZ
CIA PASS TO TCOYNE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/2016

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SUBJECT: MOI UNDERSCORES NEED FOR BROAD AND FLEXIBLE ENERGY
FACILITIES SECURITY COOPERATION

REF: A. RIYADH 8836

[B](#). RIYADH 8811

[C](#). RIYADH 5781

Classified By: Economic Counselor Robert Silverman for reasons 1.5 (b)
and (d).

Summary

[1](#). (S) Economic Counselor Silverman and Energy Attache Ross met with Dr. Saad al-Jabri, Advisor to the Assistant Minister of Interior, on November 26 to discuss the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on cooperation to improve security at critical infrastructure facilities. Dr. al-Jabri underscored the SAG's request for a wide-ranging, long-term, and flexible partnership with the USG to protect critical Saudi Arabian infrastructure. He indicated the MOI had decided in principle to purchase 30 Sikorsky helicopters, but the proposed delivery date presented a significant obstacle. Dr. al-Jabri also expressed both in this meeting, and in several other late night discussions, worries regarding Al Qaida recruitment of Saudis from the northern part of the Kingdom, many of whom share tribal ties with Iraqi Sunnis. "We will have a rough six months ahead," he predicted. End Summary.

SAG Seeks a Long-Term Security Relationship

[2](#). (S) Dr. al-Jabri underscored his consistent message (refs A and C): the SAG is seeking a long-term security relationship with the USG on critical infrastructure protection (CIP), which they hope will go far beyond protection of a handful of pre-determined sites. He views the proposed MOU as a strategic document to broadly define the cooperation. He noted his concern that language referring to a long-term partnership had been removed from the draft MOU, and requested it be re-inserted. He was perturbed with changes which narrowed the scope of proposed cooperation. While Dr. al-Jabri agreed the initial focus of this cooperation should be on energy infrastructure, he emphasized the need for a flexible agreement which could encompass a variety of potential targets, saying "threats are changing from one day to the next."

[3](#). (S) Dr. al Jabri argued the MOU must provide flexibility to allow the Joint Working Group (JWG) of experts to do their job to evaluate and implement plans to protect critical infrastructure. If the MOU pre-judges which facilities are included in the CIP program, he told us the JWG experts would be hamstrung and unable to respond to rapidly evolving threats. For example, Dr. al-Jabri noted that an attack on one of Saudi Arabia's key three power plants would shut down all oil production and exports, while an attack on a facility such as Qateef Junction would shut down "only" six million barrels per day. Finally, he noted Saudi Aramco, not the MOI, would make the determination as to which petroleum infrastructure were considered "critical."

JWG Should Evaluate and Designate
Critical Infrastructure Sites

[4](#). (S) Dr. al-Jabri indicated only the expert JWG should make any designations of critical infrastructure. The first meeting of the JWG is now planned to take place during an MOI delegation's early December visit to Washington DC. Dr. al-Jabri and the other meeting participants agreed among the JWG's first tasks should be the development of criteria for

selection of critical infrastructure sites. To date, there has been no comprehensive joint analysis of criteria for designating various forms of critical infrastructure, nor discussion of which facilities would meet designated criteria. While the DOE-DOS infrastructure protection team selected Ras Tanura, Abqaiq Oil Processing plants, and the Qateef pipeline Junction as priority energy sites, Saudi and U.S. technical experts have not made a comprehensive assessment of other critical sites, including power and water infrastructure, which could also impact petroleum production and exports. Dr. al-Jabri is also concerned with sites which impact the ability of the SAG to govern and ensure the security of the Saudi population.

HRH Bin Nayif Prepared to Sign Broad MOU
Which Avoids Prescriptive Details

15. (C) Finally, Dr. al-Jabri noted that if the CIP MOU broadly outlined the nature of the government-to-government cooperation, HRH Prince Muhammad bin Nayif, Deputy Minister of Interior, would be prepared to sign the document during his early December visit to Washington. However, the MOI did not consider it appropriate for HRH to sign a document which outlined minutiae, such as financial details or a detailed work program. The MOI views these details as appropriate for discussion and implementation by the JWG at the working level. Dr. al-Jabri further noted the MOU should only discuss issues relevant to both governments, not issues relating to internal USG administrative procedures. As an aside, Dr. al-Jabri indicated there were ample funds in the MOI's modernization program to handle reasonable expenses associated with the program.

MOI needs the MOU To Cooperate
Efficiently and Effectively

16. (C) Dr. al-Jabri reiterated the value of the MOU from his perspective is to provide cover to MOI staff to work directly with the USG without having to jump over significant SAG bureaucratic impediments. He told us three weeks prior, Saudi ministries had again received a notice forbidding meetings with foreign diplomats without MFA approval. Dr. al-Jabri believes efficiently working with the full range USG experts on urgent facilities security will be impossible the facilitating mechanisms the MOU provides.

17. (C) Finally, Dr. al-Jabri re-iterated earlier statements regarding the need for an MOU to institutionalize cooperation. He hinted he may move on from his position within a few months, possibly by promotion or retirement, and is seeking a mechanism to ensure the continuity of the CIP program.

Aramco: On the Defensive on Security Issues,
and an Issue to Manage for the MOI

18. (C) Dr. al-Jabri outlined his perspective on Saudi Aramco's relationship to the MOI CIP initiative. He praised Saudi Aramco's industrial safety practices, but said the company does not pay enough attention to security issues. He stated Saudi Aramco officials become "defensive" when their security practices come under scrutiny from MOI. Dr. al-Jabri noted MOI would bring Saudi Aramco into the CIP program discussion soon, but wished to exclude them from policies and guideline discussions more appropriate for a government-government forum. He frankly believes Saudi Aramco would present an impediment during such discussions. Once the USG and SAG JWG determines CIP program policies and guidelines, the High Commission on Industrial Security, chaired by HRH Prince Muhammad bin Nayif, Deputy Minister of the Interior, would communicate them to Saudi Aramco.

¶9. (C) (Note: Despite MOI claims that they can order Saudi Aramco to cooperate with the CIP program via the High Commission on Industrial Security, we have experienced difficulties with MOI's practical ability to broker access to Aramco facilities. Saudi Aramco officials have instead claimed they take their orders from the Ministry of Petroleum Resources (MOPR). While MOI eventually plans to bring the MOPR to the table on this initiative, the timing and manner of MOPR's involvement remain vague. We will continue to monitor and discuss appropriate access to Aramco facilities for officials working on the CIP program. End note.)

Helicopter Purchase May Hinge on Delivery Date

¶10. (S) Discussing procurement of systems under the CIP effort, Dr. al-Jabri told us the MOI had decided to purchase 30 Sikorsky helicopters. He indicated funds had been allocated for the purchase. However, he stated Sikorsky was attempting to shift the delivery date, putting the purchase in jeopardy. If Sikorsky re-instated the original delivery date, the sale could be completed, he said.

Iranian Intentions and Influence vis a vis Iraq

¶11. (S) Dr. al-Jabri discussed his deep concerns with the Iran's long-term strategic interests and the challenge this presents to Saudi Arabia. He is deeply pre-occupied with growing Iranian influence in the region, stating that if Tehran obtains a nuclear bomb, Riyadh, not Tel Aviv, would likely be the first target. He noted Iran wanted Iraq's Shi'a areas, while Jordan's and Turkey's long historical ties to parts of Iraq also led them to territorial aspirations. He underscored the SAG's long-term interest in a "united, Arab Iraq," and stated every neighbor of Iraq except Saudi Arabia has some territorial interest in some piece of Iraq. Discussing the precarious situation in Iraq, he stated the USG had requested assistance from the SAG in reaching out to Iraqi Sunni leaders. In turn, he said the SAG had asked for a formal request of assistance from the USG, but despite the SAG's willingness to help, no such request had ever been forthcoming.

¶12. (S) At another point in our conversation, Dr. al-Jabri commented on the US congressional elections that "the terrorists are celebrating." He explained that al-Qaida and the Iranians both were misinterpreting the results as a weakening of US will in Iraq. Asked if he saw any operational results from this, he pointed to increasing recruiting in Syria, and chatter that the MOI picks up of operations being planned. "We will have a rough six months ahead," he predicted, adding that the Mubahith are on heightened alert.

Internal Security: Al Qaida Recruiting
Shi'a in the North of Saudi Arabia

¶13. (S) Turning to internal security challenges, Dr. al-Jabri stated al Qaida recruiters frequently targeted Saudis residing in the north of the country. He lamented, "We are fighting a hidden war, and our own people are being recruited to fight against us." He emphasized the deep tribal and family ties which bind Saudi and Iraqi Sunnis in the Saudi Arabia-Iraq border region. He stated prior to 9/11, al Qaida had recruited in the south of Saudi Arabia, from al-Ghamdi and Qahtani tribes while now they were seeing recruits from the north, from the Shammari and Anaiza tribes. He also claimed there were Al Qaida sleeper cells in Qateef, Eastern Province.

Comment

¶14. (C) Dr. al-Jabri is Assistant Minister Muhammad bin Naif's "go to" man on a range of issues, including on the energy facilities protection initiative. Like several other key staff of Prince Muhammad, he has an extensive academic background, including in his case a PhD in Arabic grammar from al-Imam University in Riyadh, and a PhD in computer science from the US. He is from al-Qasim in northern Saudi Arabia.

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